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He seconded the motion for the reason, that, if properly understood, anthropology was the most important study to which man could devote himself. He was glad to find that, though encountering remarkable difficulties, it had established itself at Dundee.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. BRABROOK then moved the thanks of the Society to Dr. Hunt for the manner in which he had dealt with the subject at Dundee. He said they ought to congratulate themselves on having had such an able representative on that occasion.

Mr. CONRAD COX seconded.

The CHAIRMAN said he had often admired Dr. Hunt's courage and ability in fighting in support of the claims of the Society before the British Association.

Dr. HUNT, in returning thanks for the compliment, remarked on the victory which the Society had gained at Dundee, where, with a small force, they had overcome the opposition of a large body; but he said the support received from the local authorities and the justice of their cause had carried the day.

The CHAIRMAN observed, in reference to the paper about to be read, that they were all aware that Captain Bedford Pim had some years since showed the practicability of constructing a railway across the Isthmus of Nicaragua, to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The scheme was at first regarded as incapable of being realised, and several eminent men had been sent out with the view of placing the practicability of the project beyond doubt. Mr. John Collinson, the author of the paper, had effected a survey of a part of the country but little known, and in doing so had had much communication with the natives, an account of whom he would now place before them.

Mr. JOHN COLLINSON, C.E., F.R.G.S., read a paper "On the Indians of the Mosquito Territory." [Abstract. The paper will appear at length in the *Memoirs*.]

The author enumerated seven distinct tribes, viz., Mosquitos, Woolwas, Ramas, Valientes, Cookwas, Tongas, and Poyas, but confined his remarks to the three following:—Mosquitos proper, Woolwas, and Ramas. The Mosquitos he considered the most intelligent and enlightened of all, and their superiority was due to the indefatigable efforts of the Moravian missionaries, who directed their efforts, in the first instance, to their civilisation and to the abolition of their barbarous ceremonies. Their stature is short, never exceeding five feet eight inches; they are strongly built, and possess considerable powers of endurance; complexion dark, with finely-marked features; small noses; high cheek-bones; and long, coarse, black hair. The chief of the entire territory must be of the Mosquito tribe, and reigns by direct descent through the male line. The last chief had received a good education, and evinced refined taste, and fondness for the best English poets; his word was law, which was enforced with severity, and yet he was regarded with much affection by his people.

The Woolwas live an exceedingly barbarous life. Among their customs, that of flattening the head in infancy is prevalent. This

and the former tribe are great sufferers from cutaneous diseases, and, with the exception of the late king, the author had not met an individual free from it.

The Ramas are a fine race, many individuals attaining a stature of six feet, and were supposed by the author to have an admixture of Carib or Creole blood. This tribe is feared by all the others of the Mosquito country. They, moreover, commonly speak English, and show other marks of superior capabilities.

The paper concluded with two vocabularies, and was accompanied by the remark that the languages of the natives possess but the merest elements of grammar.

The thanks of the meeting having been given to Mr. Collinson for his paper,

The CHAIRMAN said that the paper had opened a curious question as to the origin of the Mosquito Indians. There could be no doubt that in former days the whole country was occupied by a race superior to those who now possessed it. That was proved by the finding there of large tombs with curious monuments, and pottery, and stone columns and figures. A very curious stone hatchet, very highly finished, was one of the implements found, and was then on the table for inspection. The question was, whether the Mosquitos were the descendants of that people or mere new arrivals. The Chairman adverted to several of the customs of the Indians described by Mr. Collinson, which were, he said, similar to those of other wild tribes, and he especially noticed the superstition of the existence of a large reptile, observing that in other parts of Nicaragua a serpent was said to have been recently seen that was 30 feet long. The Mosquito Indians were fast disappearing, but lately an attempt had been made to protect them, and Captain Pim had undertaken to advocate their claims.

Captain BEDFORD PIM.—I am sure that we must all feel very much obliged to Mr. Collinson for the paper which he has just read, and which will, I hope, form the nucleus of a valuable stock of information regarding the aborigines of this central part of the New World. There are, however, two or three points in reference to the aborigines of the Mosquito coast on which I should like to say a few words. My friend Mr. Collinson speaks with all the force of practical experience, and it will always afford me the greatest pleasure to bear witness to the courage and perseverance with which he did his duty in Mosquito, but I cannot agree in all his conclusions. In the first place, he is slightly in error in limiting the tribes to seven; there are many more; for instance, there is a very important tribe called the Smoos not mentioned by him. Then, again, I cannot agree with Mr. Collinson that the Mosquito Indians proper are the most intelligent and enlightened, *in consequence* of the indefatigable efforts of the missionaries. On the contrary, they have hearts like the nether mill-stone as regards missionary teaching. Had Mr. Collinson instanced the Ramas, who really have been induced to forego the "toona" and take to shirts

and trousers, and who form quite a decent community settled on Blewfield's Lagoon, I should have been more ready to agree with him, although the conduct of one of them, a young man named Abraham (patriarchal only in sin), whom we hired last February in Greytown to work under Mr. Collinson in the cutting, and who was seen reading his Bible the last thing at night, and the following morning had disappeared with a canoe, a portrait of a lady, and other trifles, certainly not his own property, did not reflect much credit on the teaching he had received. The Mosquitos are certainly more intelligent than any other above-named tribe of the country, for the simple reason that their tribe inhabits the coast, and has been in contact with Europeans for nearly two hundred years before missionaries came in contact with them. Again, I was very much struck with a remark made by Mr. Collinson, that the personal appearance of the Mosquitos is decidedly good when uncontaminated by the diseases introduced among them by the traders from the civilised Old World. Now, this is very hard upon the traders, and also upon the Old World. I suspect, if the truth were known, that the traders have suffered as much at the hands of the natives as the natives from the traders. It has long been the fashion to deplore that the debauchery and immorality of the wicked Old World has been engrafted on the poor savage; but the impression I have formed of the noble savage, after seeing him in a state of nature in very many parts of the world, is (to use a Yankee phrase) that he is "the meanest cuss out"; in point of fact, in coming in contact with savage races for the first time, the rule has been to find them with a pretty good load of sin on their backs quite as heavy as the civilised people of the much abused Old World. Look at the Sandwich Islanders, the Mexicans, the Esquimaux—all, every one, seems to like strong drink, and it is even now a disputed point whether syphilis was not introduced amongst Europeans by the very people whose characters we have under discussion to-night. In justice to the Moravian missionaries, I must say this—that a more earnest and hard working and painstaking body of people does not exist; they do not dream of entering into theological disputes with the natives like the Bishop of Natal with the Zulu, but persevere in their daily course; teaching, somewhat in the order of Mr. Disraeli, industry, liberty, and religion. I could supplement Mr. Collinson's very interesting paper with some more of my experience on the Mosquito Coast, but I hope other gentlemen will address the meeting; besides, this is, I trust, but the opening of the campaign on the Mosquito Coast; for, when I mention to you the name of our much esteemed hon. member, Mr. Carter Blake, and tell you that he is now on the borders of the Mosquito country, I am sure you will agree with me that if the aborigines are not thoroughly handled it will not be his fault. My only fear is that, in his zeal and affection for anthropology, he may be tempted to send us skulls and skeletons fresher than we could quite approve of.

Mr. MEYER HARRIS observed, with reference to the apparent mixture of African blood in the Mosquito Indians, that many of the habits and

customs described by Mr. Collinson were similar to those of the natives of Africa, and the vocabulary was also in many respects the same. He thought it very probable that there might have been an admixture of negro blood from the negroes who escaped from slave ships in former times.

Mr. WALTER DENDY asked Mr. Collinson whether he had any conversation with the chief he mentioned as to the habits of the people, with a view to the improvement of their mental capacity. With regard to the introduction of leprosy, he remarked that it was very extraordinary that leprosy should have been considered such a formidable disease among the Hebrews, while among the Greeks and Arabs it was comparatively innocuous. He was confident that the Levitical leprosy was a combination of malignant diseases. With respect to syphilis, he thought it probable that it was not introduced into Europe from the new world, but from Africa or Syria. No medical man, he believed, was of opinion that it originated *de novo*.

Mr. McGRIGOR ALLAN remarked, with regard to the belief of the Mosquito Indians, that the evil spirits were superior to the good spirits, that a similar belief was very prevalent among mankind. The Chinese and other people entertained the same belief; and it must be held also by people who believed that man was created perfect, and that afterwards he became wicked by the superior influence of evil spirits. He agreed with Mr. Collinson in thinking that the Mosquito Indians had been contaminated by the traders, and he protested against Captain Pim's low estimate of the character of savage races, and against the concurrence he had avowed in the American saying that "the noble savage is the greatest cuss out." We should rather be told not to treat the aborigines as we had treated them than to give them hard names. As to the introduction of syphilis, he believed it was not decided how the disease originated. He said that it was the custom in our treatment of savages to go to them with a Bible in one hand and a bottle of rum in the other, and to tell them to be like us or disappear. People of every race had their peculiarities and good qualities, if travellers would take the trouble to find them out, and he instanced the Mexican Natives and the New Zealanders as fine specimens of Aboriginal tribes. [Dr. Charnock incidentally raised the question whether the term "Indian" could properly be applied to savages generally. The name was originally derived from the river Indus, and was given to the natives who were found near its banks.—The Chairman thought Dr. Charnock was going too far in attempting to restrict the meaning so narrowly. It was a name that had become very generally applied.—Major Owen, taking Dr. Charnock's view of the question, proposed that the Society should not use the word in a loose manner generally. He thought it was a matter that should be submitted to the Council.—It having been proposed by a member, as a means of diminishing the confusion of the general use of the term, that wild tribes in the East should be called "East Indians," Major Owen observed that in the East that term was applied only to the half-caste race between the European and native.—The Chairman said it would be very difficult to draw a line. The conversation then ended.]

Mr. COLLINSON replied to the various remarks on his paper. He said with regard to Captain Pim's observations that the Indians were improved by association with Europeans instead of being contaminated, that Captain Pim must refer to those Europeans who were settled on the coast and carrying on a regular trade ; but those to whom he (Mr. Collinson) alluded were traders, who occasionally paid visits to the coast in small craft, to traffic with the natives. Those were, as a rule, not the most respectable members of society, and they did not certainly improve the Indians. The original Indians were superior as workmen to the mongrel descendants of the Indians and Spaniards. He could not agree with Captain Pim's opinion of the Moravian missionaries. On the contrary, he thought they went to work the right way to civilise the men, by introducing among them articles of clothing, the means of cooking, and other appliances of civilised life. With respect to the Indian king he had spoken of, and his influence on the people, unfortunately he could do little, for his power had been usurped from him. He was a pure Indian, the king being obliged to be so by the law of the country. With regard to the grammar of the Woolwas, on which a question had been asked, they had none. They had a vocabulary of about 1,000 words, but they did not indulge in the refinement of grammar.

Major OWEN inquired how they put the words together.

Mr. COLLINSON said if they wanted to give a command they used the word meaning command ; or if they wanted to express any action, they used the word signifying that action.

The CHAIRMAN was of opinion that Mr. Collinson was mistaken in that respect, for there must be a grammar of some kind, of course.

The meeting was then adjourned to the 19th instant.

NOVEMBER 19TH, 1867.

DR. CHARNOCK, V.P., IN THE CHAIR.

THE minutes of the preceding meeting having been read and confirmed,

Dr. HUNT made some observations on the " Report on Anthropology at the British Association," which was then presented, for the purpose of correcting some misrepresentations by the public press, which had caused adverse comments. It had been represented that the report stated that anthropology was in future to be recognised as a department of the biological section of the British Association, but that statement was not borne out by the report. It should have been said that the anthropologists hoped to be recognised in section E of the Association. He was anxious to correct that erroneous impression, and he trusted that at the next meeting of the Association anthropology would be associated with ethnology and geography in a common section. There had been no guarantee that such would be the case, for it was not in the power of any officer of the Association to give such